

# MEMO

**To:** File – Caldwell-Bradford School  
**From:** HLC Staff  
**Date:** October 8, 2022  
**Re:** Comments from State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on Designation Report for Caldwell-Bradford School, within Huntersville’s Sphere of Influence

By email dated August 23, 2024, SHPO staff provided feedback based on their review of the Designation Report for the Caldwell-Bradford School. The SHPO staff concluded that “the building has no historic integrity,” a perceived shortcoming that they contend “cannot be overcome with an improved argument or additional documentation.”

HLC staff respectfully disagrees with that conclusion. As noted in the communication from SHPO staff, “Local landmark designation means the community recognizes the property is worthy of preservation because of its special significance to the local community.” The Designation Report clearly details the requisite special significance of the Caldwell-Bradford School to Huntersville and Mecklenburg County, including the following facts:

- The Caldwell-Bradford School is one of the only known surviving one-teacher schoolhouses remaining in Mecklenburg County. As such, it is a rare historically significant representation of the earliest public education system and institutions that once dotted the county’s rural landscape in the early twentieth century.
- Built in the 1890s and employing only one teacher at any given time, the Caldwell-Bradford School provided instruction up to grade six for students of all ages throughout the rural Deweese township for more than twenty years.
- The women who taught in the Caldwell-Bradford School and the children they educated hailed from some of north Mecklenburg’s earliest settlers, families whose surnames remain prominent in the Huntersville community a century later, including Alexander, Barnhardt, Bradford, Caldwell, Cashion, Cowell, Deweese, Jetton, and Knox.
- Lying between two other significant north Mecklenburg designated local landmarks – the McAuley Road Farmland and the Cashion-Moore Family Cemetery – the Caldwell-Bradford School completes the historical narrative of the county’s agrarian beginnings.
- The Caldwell-Bradford School evidences the evolution of public education in Mecklenburg County and North Carolina as one-teacher schoolhouses transitioned to the graded-school model through school consolidations and closures and student busing.
- The structural changes made to the Caldwell-Bradford School building after its decommission as a school have acquired additional historical significance as a century-old example of architectural design and ingenuity in the adaptive reuse of a former educational resource. As a residence since the 1920s, the structure stands as part of the rapidly diminishing inventory of century-old homes remaining in north Mecklenburg.

Following review of the Designation Report and the SHPO feedback, HLC staff contends that the Caldwell-Bradford School building has retained both its historical integrity and special local significance, thereby warranting local landmark designation. The Designation Report has been updated to emphasize the forthcoming facts.